

Thurston County Superior Court judge seeks to replace retiring Court of Appeals judge

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A Thurston County Superior Court judge announced Friday she is seeking election to the Washington State Court of Appeals, as the Appeals Court judge she is seeking to replace announced her retirement.

In a news release, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Lisa Sutton announced Friday that she will run for a seat on the District II Court of Appeals based in Tacoma.

In turn, Current Division II Court of Appeals Judge J. Robin Hunt announced Friday that she will retire effective at the end of the year. Hunt also stated in a news release that she will endorse Sutton as her replacement on the bench.

"Judge Sutton has trial and appellate experience as an attorney, and superior court experience in all types of cases likely to be heard by the Court of Appeals," Hunt said. "Those qualities will serve the citizens and the court well. I'm proud to endorse her for this position."

Division II Court of Appeals judges hear appeals of court cases from Pierce, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Thurston Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis Pacific, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties.

Hunt, originally from Bainbridge Island in Kitsap County, has served on the Court of Appeals for 18 years, and has occasionally served as a pro tem justice for the state Supreme Court. In Hunt's news release, she states that she is retiring to spend more time with family and pursue other interests, such as music, physical fitness and a new mental health court in Kitsap County.

In Thurston County, Judge Sutton is currently the presiding Superior Court judge in Juvenile and Family Court. She was appointed to the bench in November 2010 by former Governor Christine Gregoire. Sutton was reelected in Thurston County in 2011 and 2012.

Before Sutton was appointed as a Thurston County Superior Court judge, she served as Senior Counsel and Assistant Attorney General for more than 24 years under Attorneys General Rob McKenna, Christine Gregoire and Ken Eikenberry.

Sutton will remain on the Thurston County Superior Court bench as she runs for election to the Court of Appeals, Presiding Thurston County Superior Court Judge Carol Murphy confirmed Friday.

Officials in the Washington Secretary of State's Elections Division said that if Sutton wins election to the Court of Appeals, Gov. Jay Inslee will appoint a new Thurston County Superior Court judge to the bench in 2015.

The official filing period for candidates seeking to replace Hunt does not begin until May, an elections official said.

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